

**MARVEL**

514

*THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!*

# Fantastic Four



WAID  
KESEL  
MEDINA  
VLASCO



# THE FANTASTIC FOUR

**4** A team—and a family—of adventurers, explorers and imaginauts, the Fantastic Four lead lives both ordinary—and extraordinary. As of today:

**3** Following several turbulent months, the Richards family has finally regained much of its footing...on a very slippery slope...

**2** ...with the team's fame and fortune badly undercut. Together, they must start from scratch to rebuild their finances and their public image. It can be done...

**1** ...but New York is a tough town.



STAN LEE PRESENTS

## "DYSFUNCTIONAL"

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## Part 1 of 3





Longtime ADMIRER, first time HERE. ☺

Mr. Whitmore, I--

Please don't call me that, Ms. ZeroG-- especially not HERE.

Here we use our CHOSEN names--the names we've given OURSELVES. The names that REVEAL ourselves.



Call me WIZARD.

And remember-- it's not BRAGGING if it's the TRUTH...

LOL!LOL!LOL!LOL!LOL!LOL!LOL!



My bad. ☹ Won't happen again... Wizard.

I was just wondering what you thought of the Fantastic Four's TROUBLES lately? Unless you already COVERED that?



Barely scratched the SURFACE.

I believe their aborted COUP in Latveria and, more recently, the Human Torch's incompetent attempt and complete FAILURE to capture a second-stringer like HYDRO-MAN shows a side to the Fantastic Four that they have successfully hidden for YEARS.

This change in the wind is long overdue and FAR from over. What goes around, COMES around.



Years ago, they destroyed MY life... not just tarnished but CORRODED my reputation...and twisted my fame into INFAMY. Now, finally, it's THEIR turn.

They have not hit bottom.

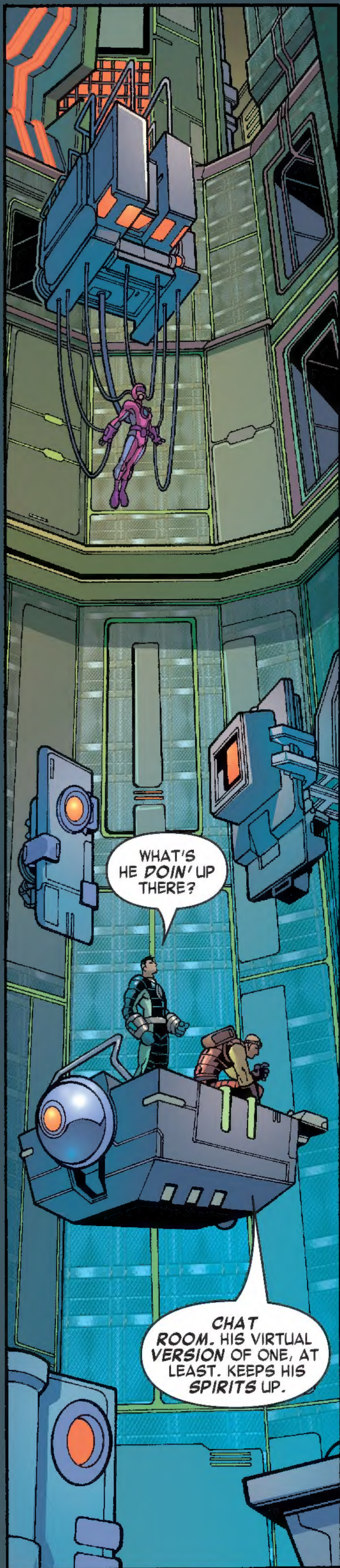
YET.

And I predict...









WHAT'S HE *DOIN'* UP THERE?

CHAT ROOM. HIS VIRTUAL VERSION OF ONE, AT LEAST. KEEPS HIS SPIRITS UP.



THE THING HE BETTER KEEP UP WITH IS *ME*! NEVER HAD SO MUCH *ENERGY* FLOWIN' THROUGH MY BODY! FEEL LIKE I COULD TAKE ON THE FANTASTIC FOUR ALL BY MYSELF!

GET A HOBBY, HYDRO-MAN--YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TIME TO KILL.

PATIENCE. WE DON'T MOVE OUT 'TIL HE GIVES THE WORD-- 'TIL THE TRAP'S READY TO BE *SPRUNG*. AND THERE'S GOT TO BE *FOUR* OF US. THAT'S HOW HE WORKS.



MAYBE I COULD BUILD SOME FREAKIN' *STAIRS* IN THIS PLACE! A FEW GOOD-SIZED *FLOORS* WOULD BE NICE, TOO...



WHAT DO YOU HAVE-- WATER ON THE *BRAIN*? THIS PLACE WASN'T BUILT FOR *US*, MORON! IT'S DESIGNED FOR SOMEONE WHO OPERATES ON A WHOLE DIFFERENT *PLANE*! A *GENIUS* WHO'S BROKEN FREE OF THE CONSTRAINTS OF *GRAVITY* ITSELF!

THAT'S WHY HE'S CALLED THE *WINGLESS WIZARD*!



VERY MOVING. I'M ON THE VERGE OF BIG, WET TEARS.

SO WHILE WE'RE WAITIN' FOR YOUR WONDERFUL WIZARD--WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU UP TO, TRAPSTER?

GUESS.

SETTIN' TRAPS?

GOOD GUESS.





DIDN'T THINK THE ALL-KNOWIN' ONE WOULD NEED **HELP** WITH THAT STUFF.

HE *DONESN'T*, REALLY. HE JUST HAS **OTHER** THINGS ON HIS MIND.

HIS *PERIMETER* SECURITY IS SOLID--BUT ON THE OFF CHANCE SOMEONE GETS **PAST** THAT, I'M PUTTING IN SOME **BACKUPS**. GLOB-BOMBS. RAZOR-SHARDS. INCENDIARIES.

PASSES THE TIME.



THIRSTY WORK.

YEAH, IT...IT *IS*, NOW THAT YOU...



YOU--!



YEAH--ME!

YOU KNEW THE WIZ AMPED-UP MY **POWERS**--GUESS YOU *DIDN'T* KNOW IT MEANS I NOW GOT **HYDRO-KINETIC** CONTROL OVER ANY WATER **NEAR** ME!

WATER IN THE **GROUND**, WATER IN THE **AIR**--EVEN THE WATER IN **YOU**!



SUCK YOU **DRY** IN A MINUTE **FLAT**!

WHO'S THE **MORON** NOW, MOR--





UHLGH!!



REHYDRATE  
THE TRAPSTER.  
NOW.

WHA...WHA  
APPNINN TUH  
MHEE... ?

WHEN I INCREASED  
YOUR ABILITIES,  
HYDRO-MAN, I  
ALSO DECREASED  
YOUR MOLECULAR  
STABILITY.

FROM NOW ON, IF YOU DO ANYTHING  
THAT DISPLEASES ME--**ANYTHING**--I WILL  
TRIGGER A REACTION THAT WILL CAUSE  
YOU TO LOSE ALL **COHESION**. YOU WILL  
**DISSOLVE** INTO A PUDDLE--**SENTIENT**,  
BUT COMPLETELY UNABLE TO RE-FORM  
WITHOUT MY ASSISTANCE.

I APOLOGIZE  
FOR NOT MENTIONING  
THIS **SOONER**.



KHILLH...  
YOOO...

NO. IF I  
**DIE**, THIS PROCESS  
WILL BE ACTIVATED  
AUTOMATICALLY. YOUR  
FATE WILL BE **WORSE**  
THAN DEATH.

YOU OWE ME  
**EVERYTHING** NOW,  
HYDRO-MAN. YOUR  
POWERS. YOUR  
LOYALTY.

YOUR  
**LIFE**.

COUNTLESS TIMES I HAVE TRIED  
TO FORGE A TEAM TO COUNTER-  
BALANCE THE **FANTASTIC FOUR**.  
EACH TIME, ITS MEMBERS HAVE  
TURNED THEIR BACKS ON ME--  
ON **ME**!--AND LEFT!

THAT WILL  
NEVER HAPPEN  
**AGAIN**! NO ONE  
WILL **EVER** LEAVE  
THIS TEAM...

...UNLESS I  
**DECIDE** IT'S  
THEIR TIME  
TO GO!





SHUHK!  
KHEK!<

THUH...  
THANKS,  
BOSS...

GOOD BOY,  
PUDDLES.

IN YOUR  
DREAMS.

WELL, IN  
YOUR CASE,  
A WET--



FWOM



NO! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!  
MY TRAPS DON'T GO OFF  
ACCIDENTALLY!

I'LL...  
I'LL HANDLE THIS,  
WIZARD! I'LL FIX  
IT! DON'T--

DO NOT  
WORRY-- YOU  
DID NOT CAUSE  
THIS.

THE BLUE  
FLAME ALWAYS  
SIGNALS THE  
ARRIVAL  
OF THE FIRE  
MAIDEN.

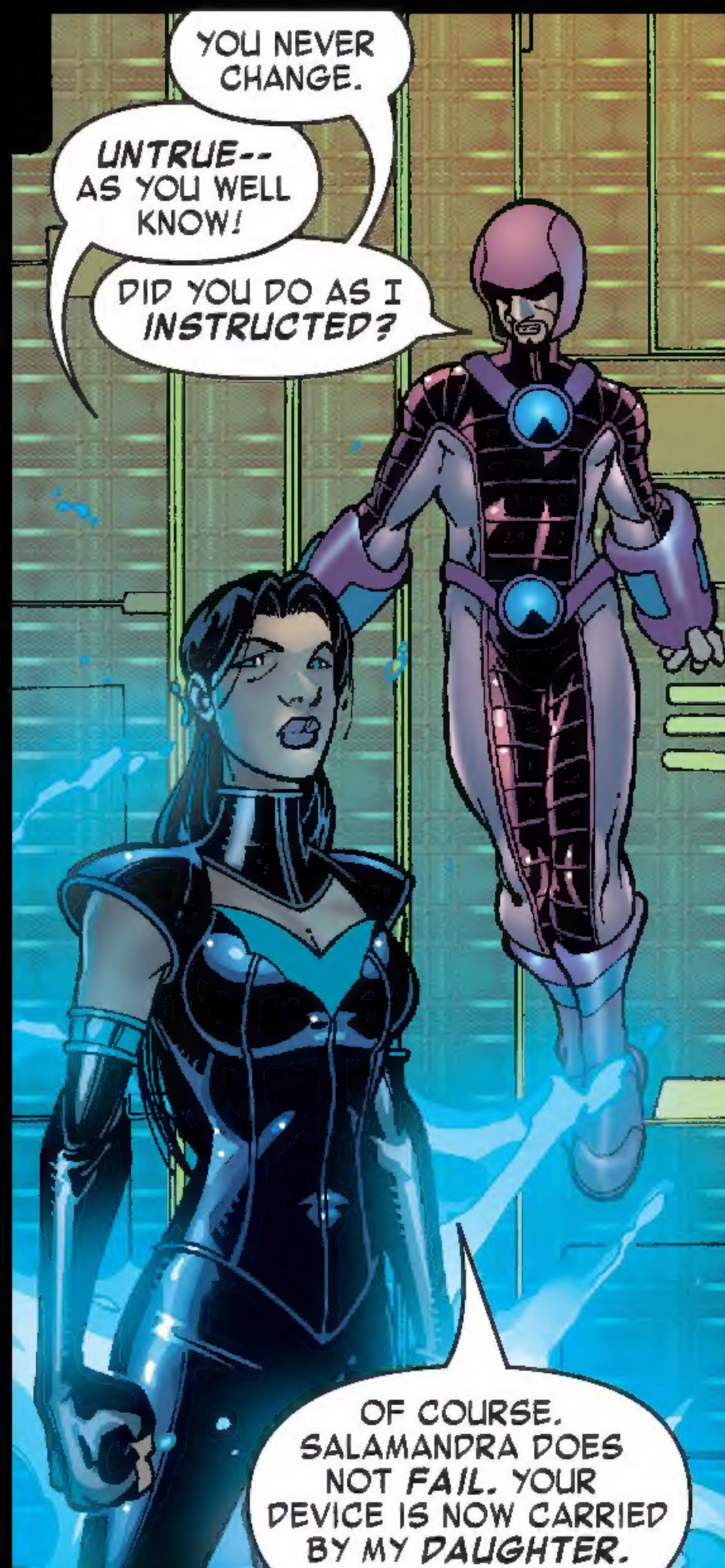






TRAPSTER.  
HYDRO-MAN. MEET  
OUR FOURTH AND  
FINAL MEMBER.

THERE IS  
NO NEED TO RISE,  
BOYS--IT IS ONLY  
RIGHT FOR YOU TO BOW  
DOWN BEFORE THE  
DRAGON'S DAUGHTER--  
**SALAMANDRA!**



YOU NEVER  
CHANGE.

UNTRUE--  
AS YOU WELL  
KNOW!

DID YOU DO AS I  
INSTRUCTED?

OF COURSE.  
SALAMANDRA DOES  
NOT FAIL. YOUR  
DEVICE IS NOW CARRIED  
BY MY DAUGHTER.



DAUGHTER?

A GIRL OF *NINETEEN*.  
SHE'S BEEN EXCHANGING  
E-MAILS WITH THE *HUMAN  
TORCH*. THEY'VE ARRANGED  
TO *MEET*. THIS WAY, WE'LL  
KNOW *WHERE* AND *WHEN*  
TO CATCH YOUNG STORM  
WITH HIS GUARD  
DOWN.

WE'LL HIT  
HIM WITH THE  
FORCE OF A  
*HURRICANE*.



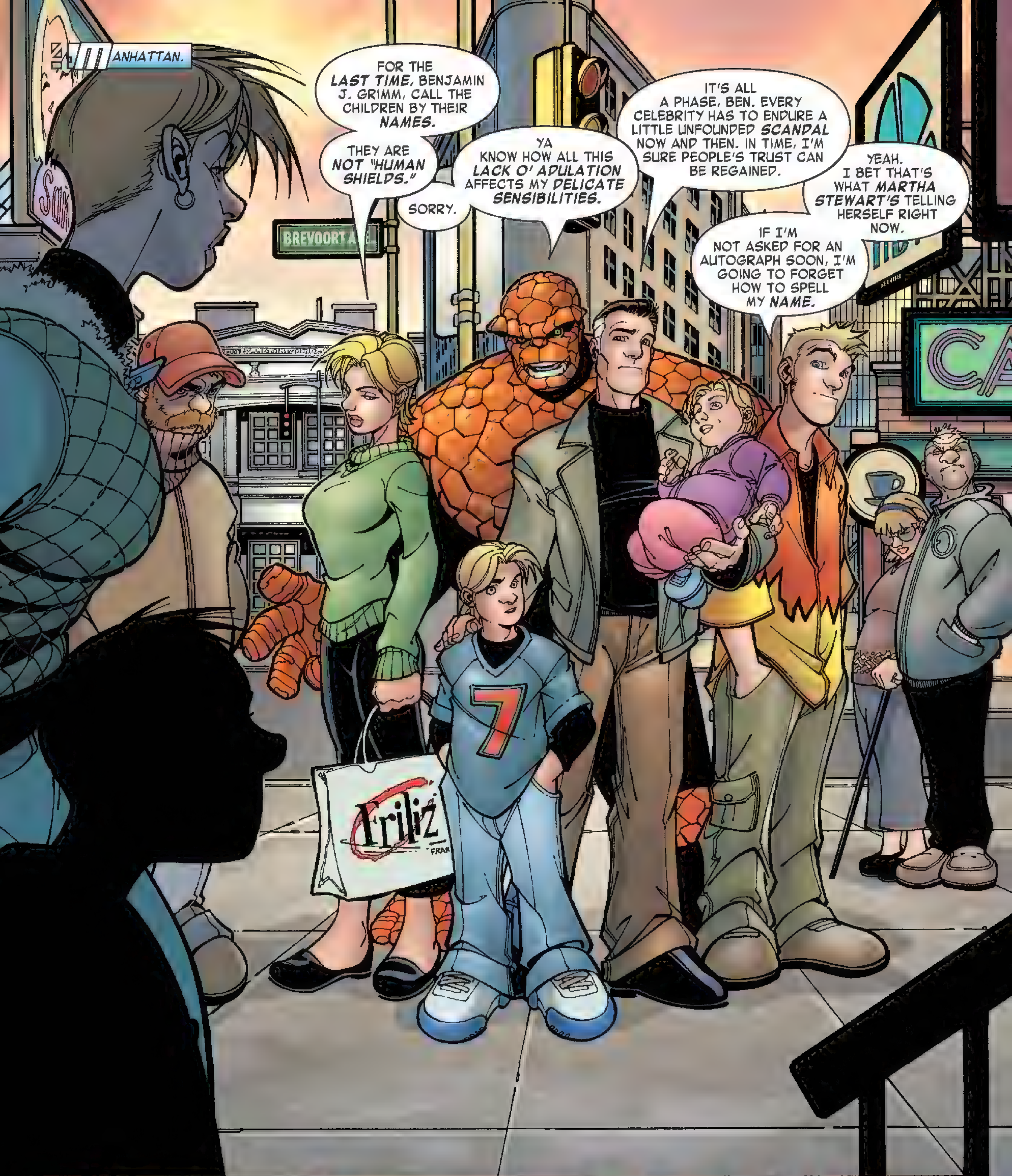
AND WHAT'VE YOU DONE TO *SALLY*  
HERE TO MAKE HER PLAY ALONG?  
OR IS SHE MORE THE *BOOTLICKER*  
TYPE LIKE--

*LOYAL*, YOU  
PUTZ! THE WORD IS  
*LOYAL*! AFTER ALL THE  
WIZARD AND I HAVE BEEN  
THROUGH *TOGETHER*, HE  
KNOWS HE CAN *COUNT*  
ON ME!









MANHATTAN.

FOR THE LAST TIME, BENJAMIN J. GRIMM, CALL THE CHILDREN BY THEIR NAMES.

THEY ARE NOT "HUMAN SHIELDS."

SORRY.

YA KNOW HOW ALL THIS LACK O' ADULATION AFFECTS MY DELICATE SENSIBILITIES.

IT'S ALL A PHASE, BEN. EVERY CELEBRITY HAS TO ENDURE A LITTLE UNFOUNDED SCANDAL NOW AND THEN. IN TIME, I'M SURE PEOPLE'S TRUST CAN BE REGAINED.

YEAH. I BET THAT'S WHAT MARTHA STEWART'S TELLING HERSELF RIGHT NOW.

IF I'M NOT ASKED FOR AN AUTOGRAPH SOON, I'M GOING TO FORGET HOW TO SPELL MY NAME.

MAYBE WE SHOULD TAKE THE KIDS BACK HOME HONEY. I DIDN'T REALIZE WE'D BE GETTING THIS CHILLY A RECEPTION.

WE CAN'T PROTECT THEM FROM EVERYTHING THAT'S SAID ABOUT US, SUE. BETTER TO SHOW THEM NOT TO BE AFRAID. BUT I AGREE--





"--WE'VE HAD BETTER DAYS."

CHICO! LONG TIME, NO SEE! I WUZ HOPIN' YOU'D BE OUT T'DAY!

GIMME TWO WITH EVERYTHING!

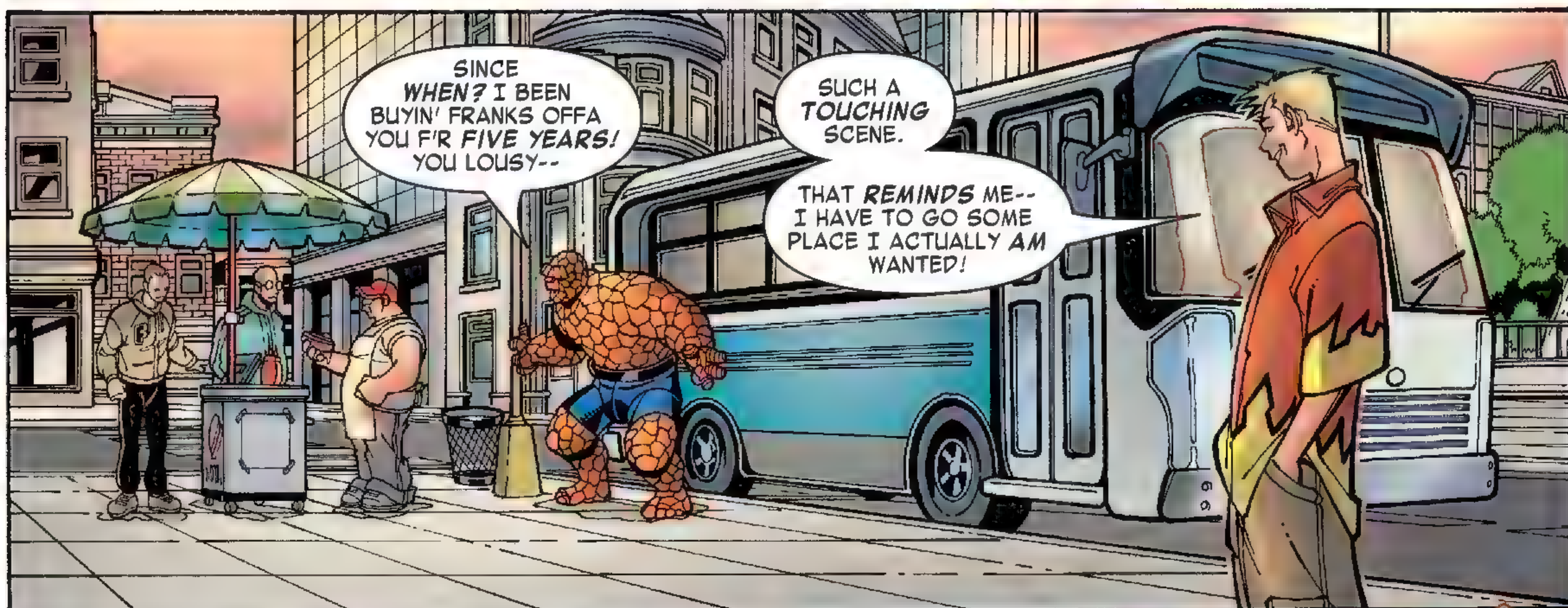
NO.

"NO"? WHADDAYAMEAN, "NO"?



NO SHOES, NO SHIRT, NO SERVICE. NOW AMSCRAY. YOU'RE SCARIN' OFF CUSTOMERS.

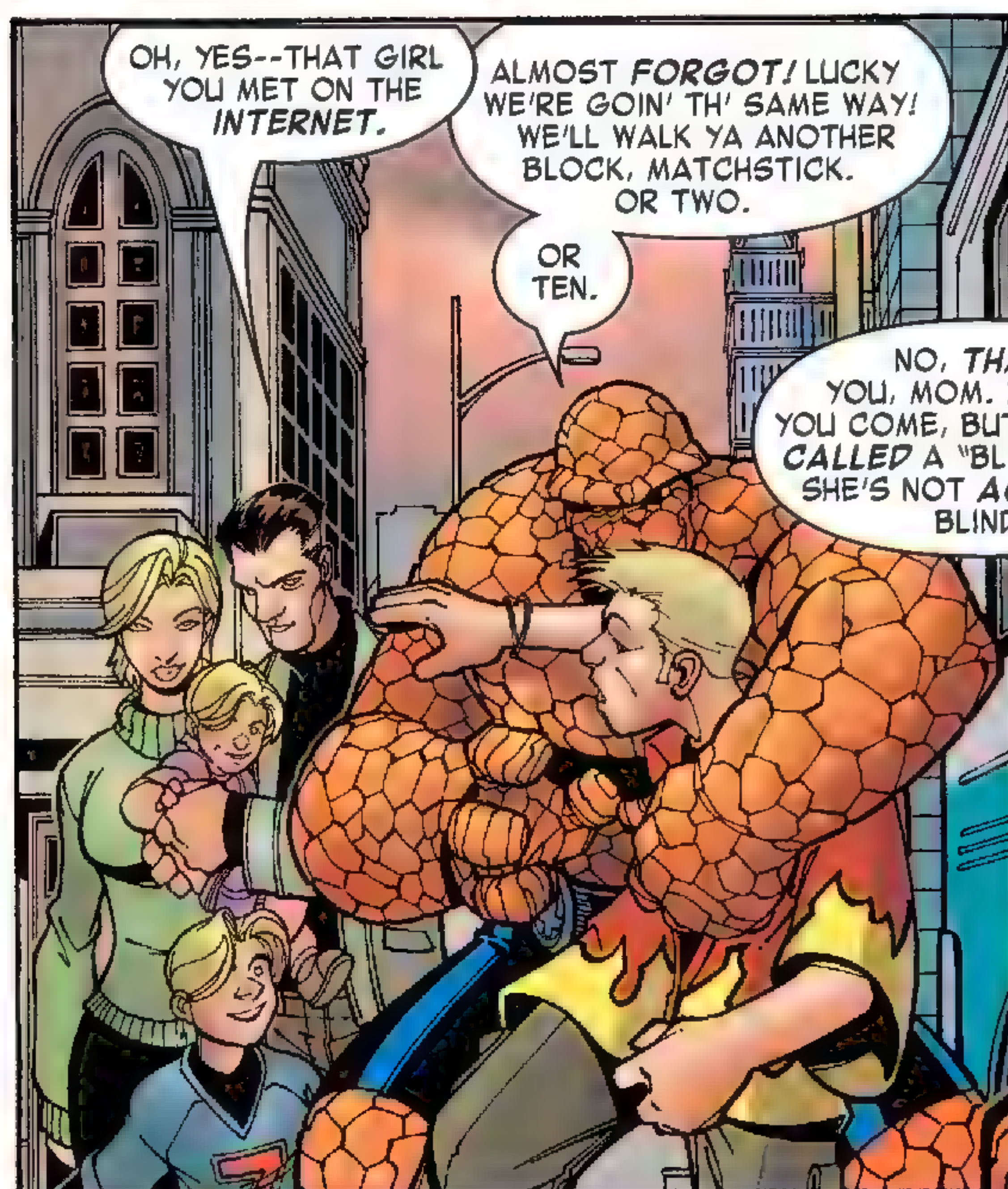
MANAGEMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE SERVICE.



SINCE WHEN? I BEEN BUYIN' FRANKS OFFA YOU F'R FIVE YEARS! YOU LOUSY--

SUCH A TOUCHING SCENE.

THAT REMINDS ME-- I HAVE TO GO SOME PLACE I ACTUALLY AM WANTED!

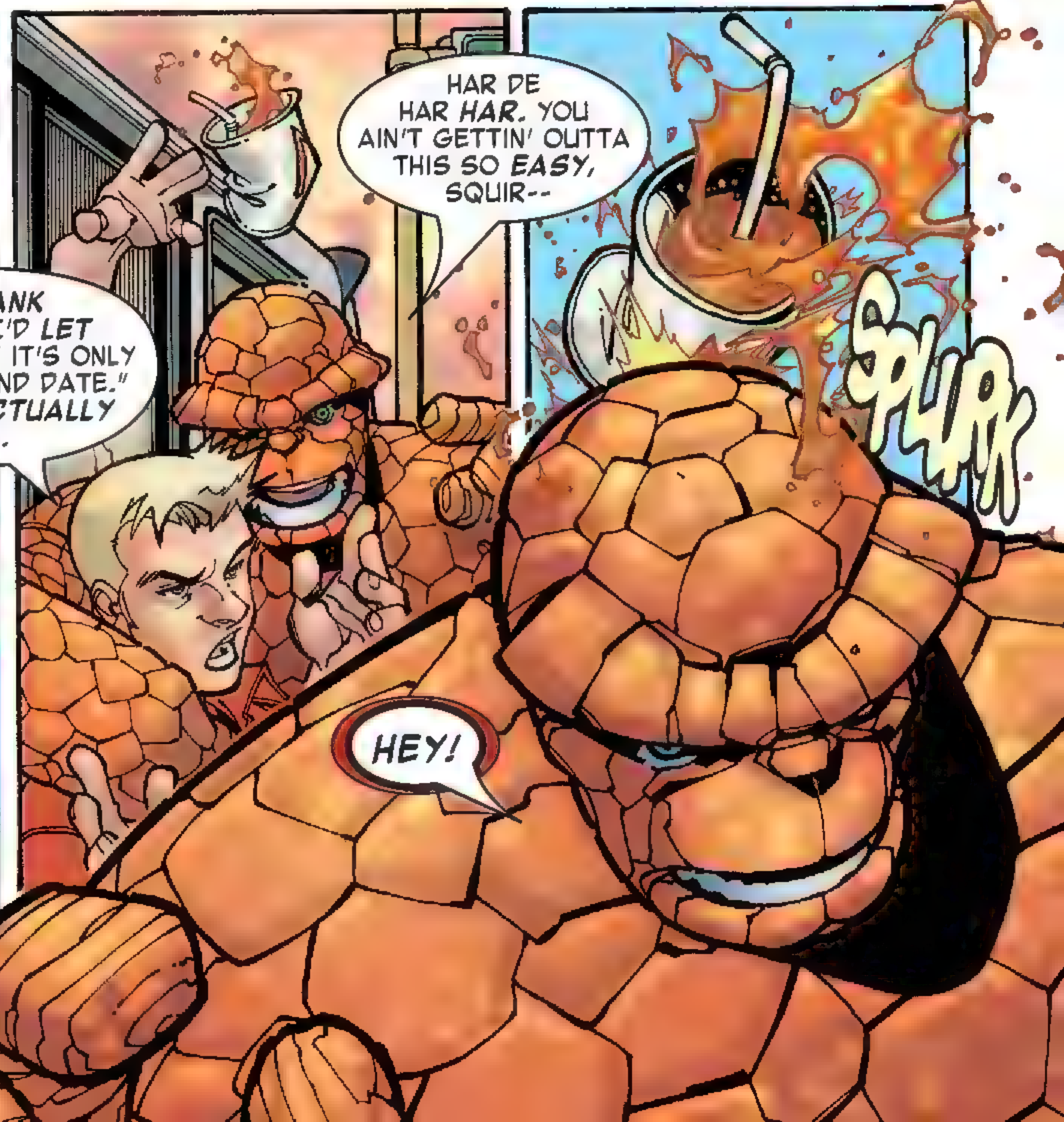


OH, YES--THAT GIRL YOU MET ON THE INTERNET.

ALMOST FORGOT! LUCKY WE'RE GOIN' TH' SAME WAY! WE'LL WALK YA ANOTHER BLOCK, MATCHSTICK. OR TWO.

OR TEN.

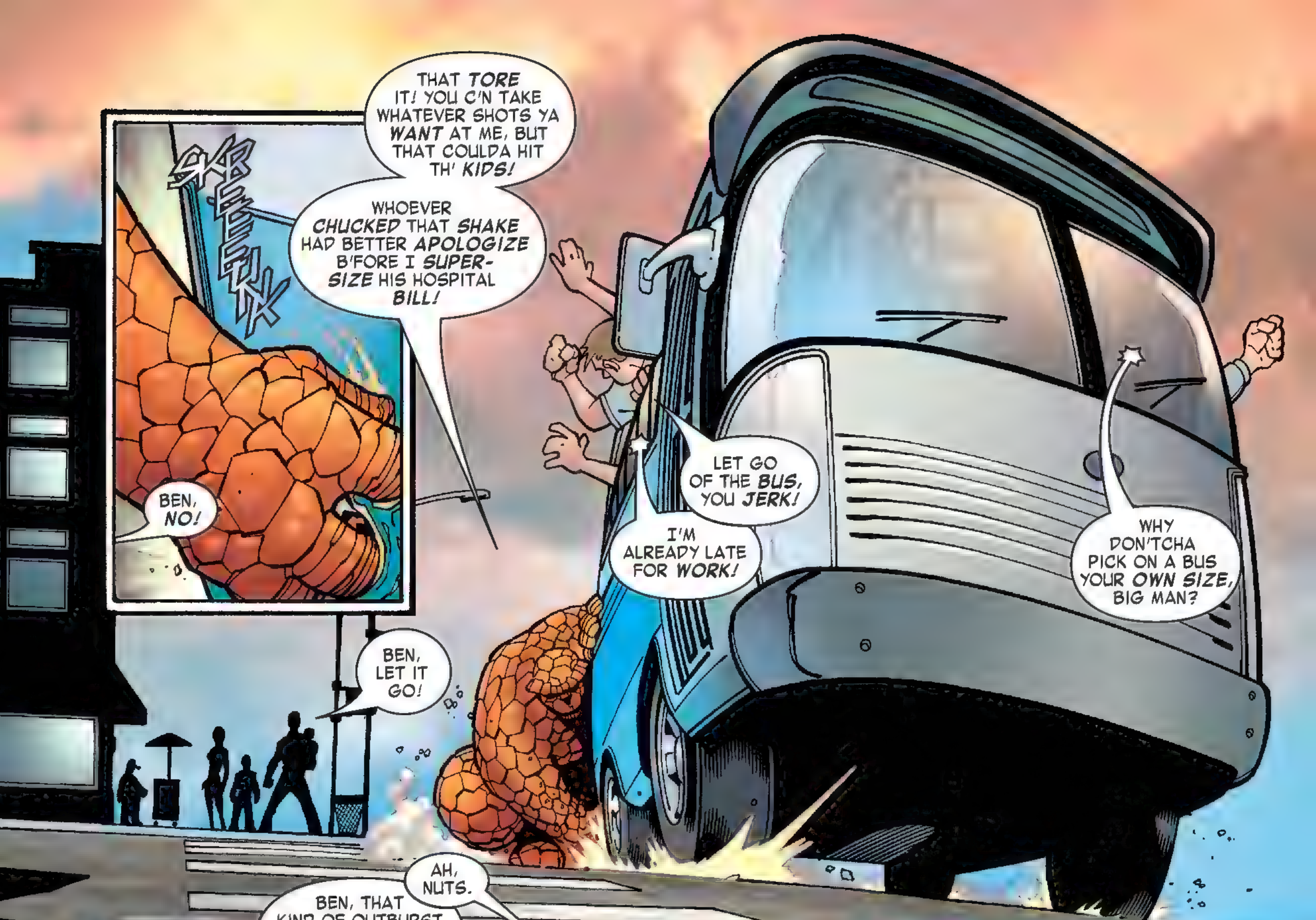
NO, THANK YOU, MOM. I'D LET YOU COME, BUT IT'S ONLY CALLED A "BLIND DATE." SHE'S NOT ACTUALLY BLIND.



HAR DE HAR DE. YOU AIN'T GETTIN' OUTTA THIS SO EASY, SQUIR--

HEY!





THAT TORE IT! YOU C'N TAKE WHATEVER SHOTS YA WANT AT ME, BUT THAT COULDA HIT TH' KIDS!

WHOEVER CHUCKED THAT SHAKE HAD BETTER APOLOGIZE B'FORE I SUPER-SIZE HIS HOSPITAL BILL!

BEN, NO!

LET GO OF THE BUS, YOU JERK!

I'M ALREADY LATE FOR WORK!

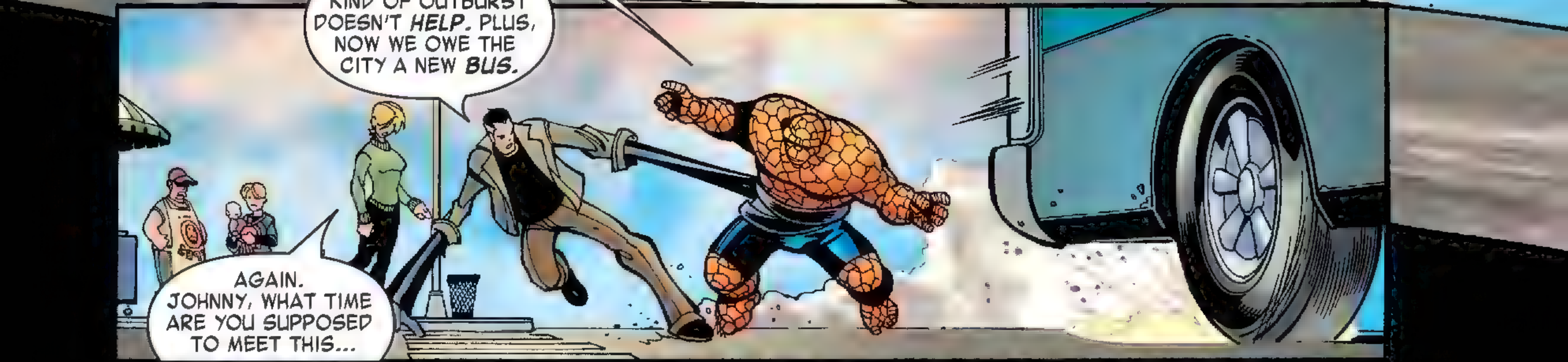
WHY DON'TCHA PICK ON A BUS YOUR OWN SIZE, BIG MAN?

BEN, LET IT GO!

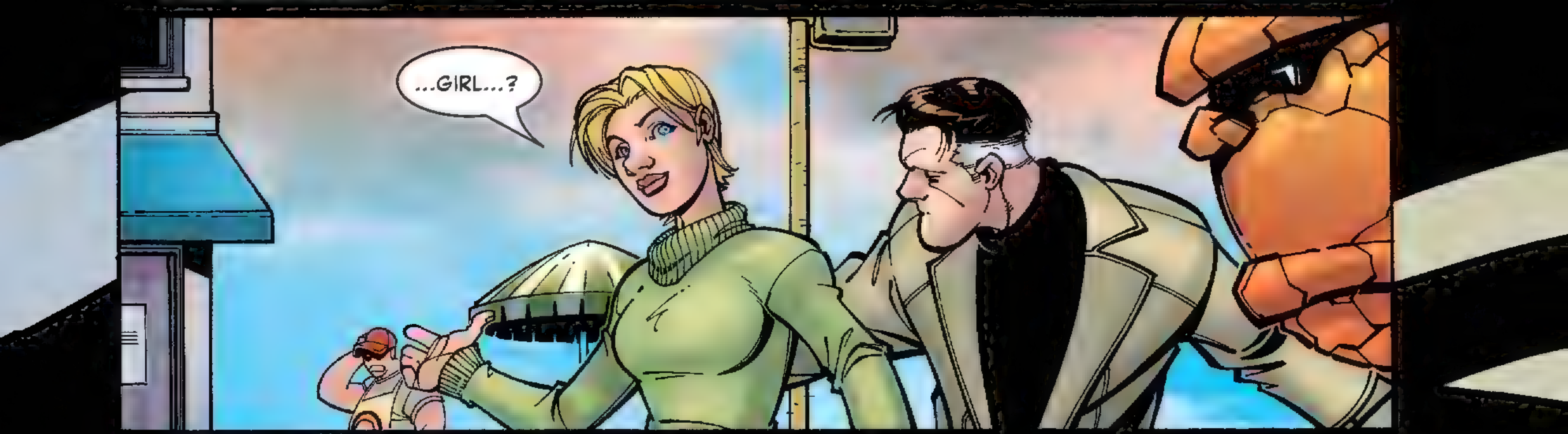
AH, NUTS.

BEN, THAT KIND OF OUTBURST DOESN'T HELP. PLUS, NOW WE OWE THE CITY A NEW BUS.

AGAIN. JOHNNY, WHAT TIME ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO MEET THIS...



...GIRL...?

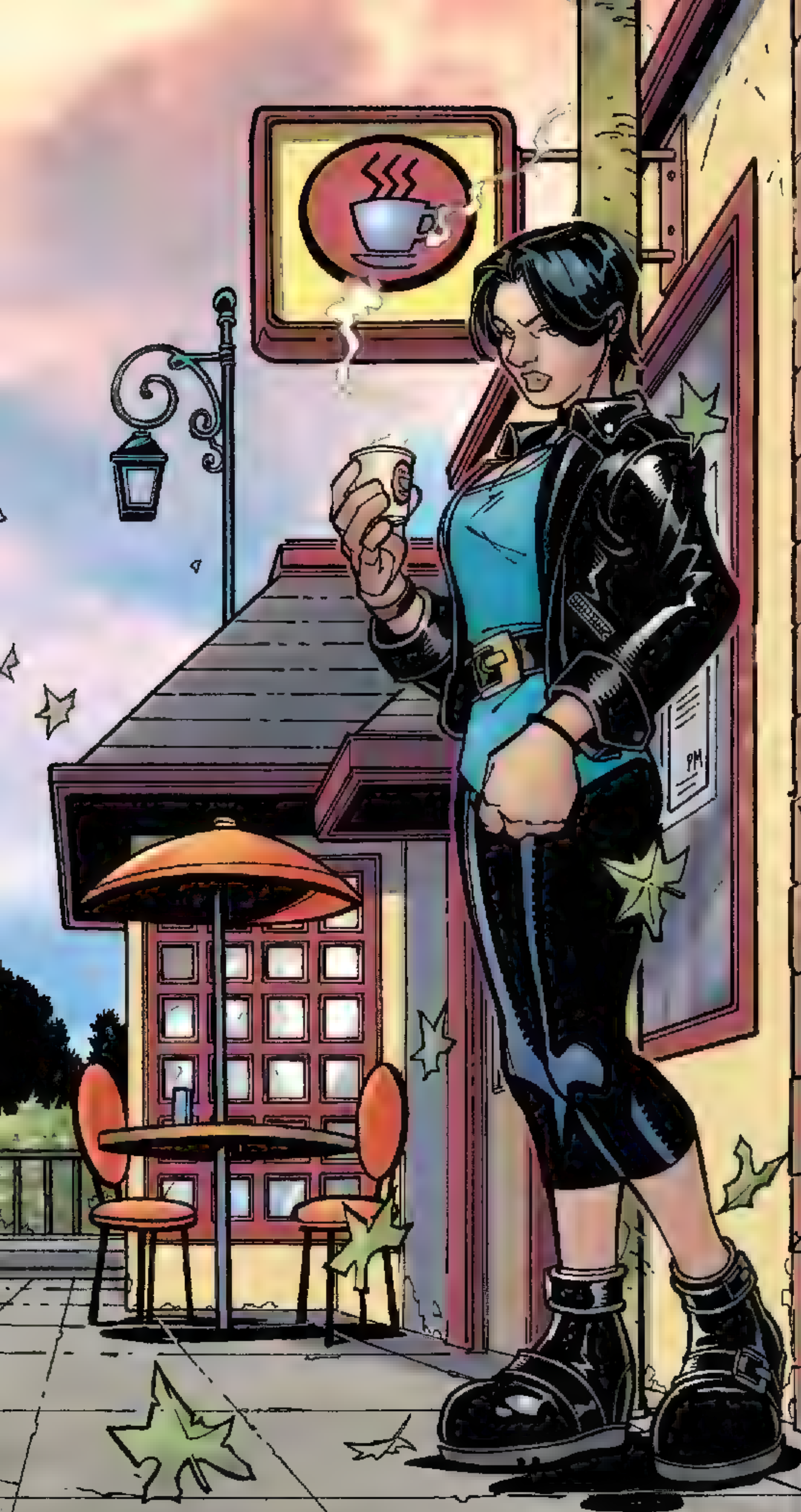


IT AIN'T FAIR. HE SHOULDN'TA GOT AWAY SO EASY.

YES. IF ONLY SOMEONE HAD TAPPED INTO HIS E-MAIL TO LEARN WHERE HE WAS MEETING THIS GIRL...







YOUR CHINESE  
CLOCK IS READY.  
YES, YOUR  
CHINESE  
CLOCK...

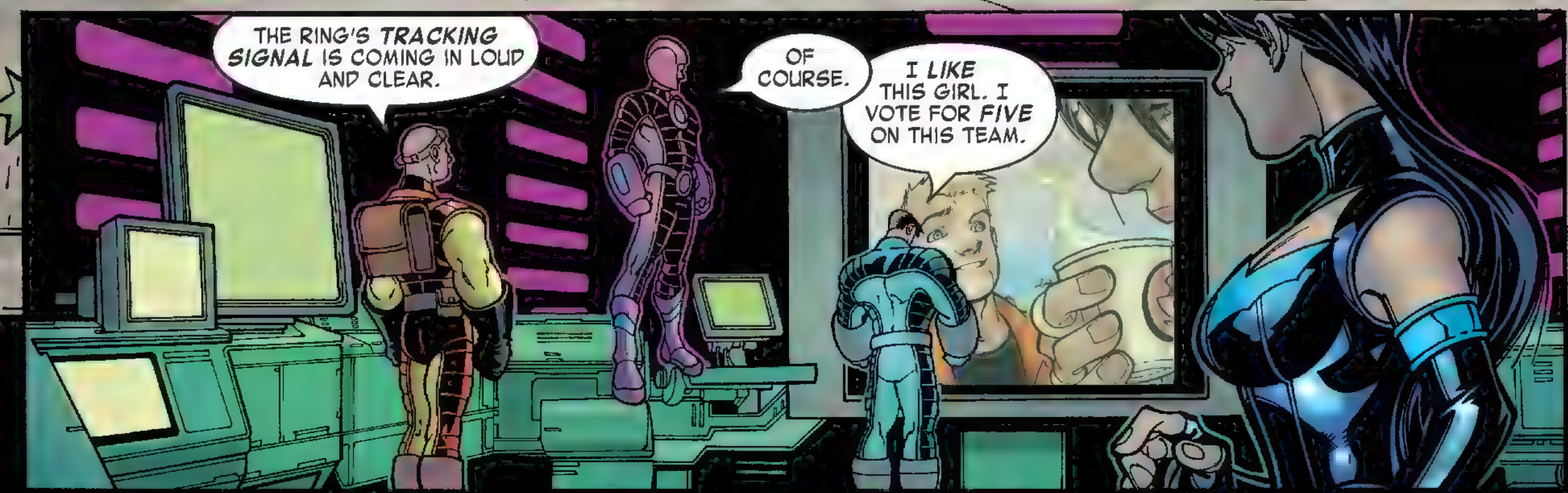
PLEASE. IF YOU'RE  
GOING TO PLAY  
THIS LIKE SOME  
SPY-MEET--DO  
IT LECARRE,  
NOT MONTY  
PYTHON.

AFRAID THE BEST I  
CAN DO IS JAMES  
BOND.

GUESS THAT MEANS  
YOUR NAME IS  
STORM...JOHNNY  
STORM.

AND YOU  
MUST BE COLE.  
IS THAT A FIRST  
OR A LAST NAME?

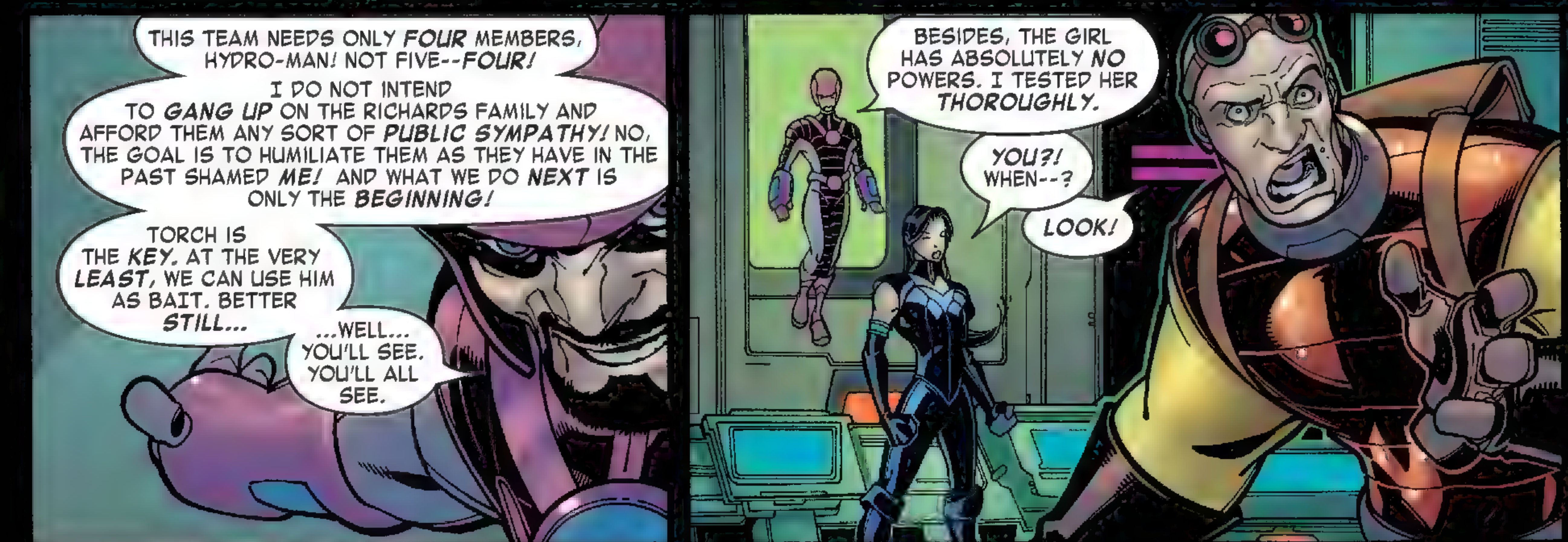
IT'S  
WHAT  
IT IS.  
IT'S  
ENOUGH.



THE RING'S TRACKING  
SIGNAL IS COMING IN LOUD  
AND CLEAR.

OF  
COURSE.

I LIKE  
THIS GIRL. I  
VOTE FOR FIVE  
ON THIS TEAM.



THIS TEAM NEEDS ONLY FOUR MEMBERS,  
HYDRO-MAN! NOT FIVE--FOUR!

I DO NOT INTEND  
TO GANG UP ON THE RICHARDS FAMILY AND  
AFFORD THEM ANY SORT OF PUBLIC SYMPATHY! NO,  
THE GOAL IS TO HUMILIATE THEM AS THEY HAVE IN THE  
PAST SHAMED ME! AND WHAT WE DO NEXT IS  
ONLY THE BEGINNING!

TORCH IS  
THE KEY. AT THE VERY  
LEAST, WE CAN USE HIM  
AS BAIT. BETTER  
STILL...

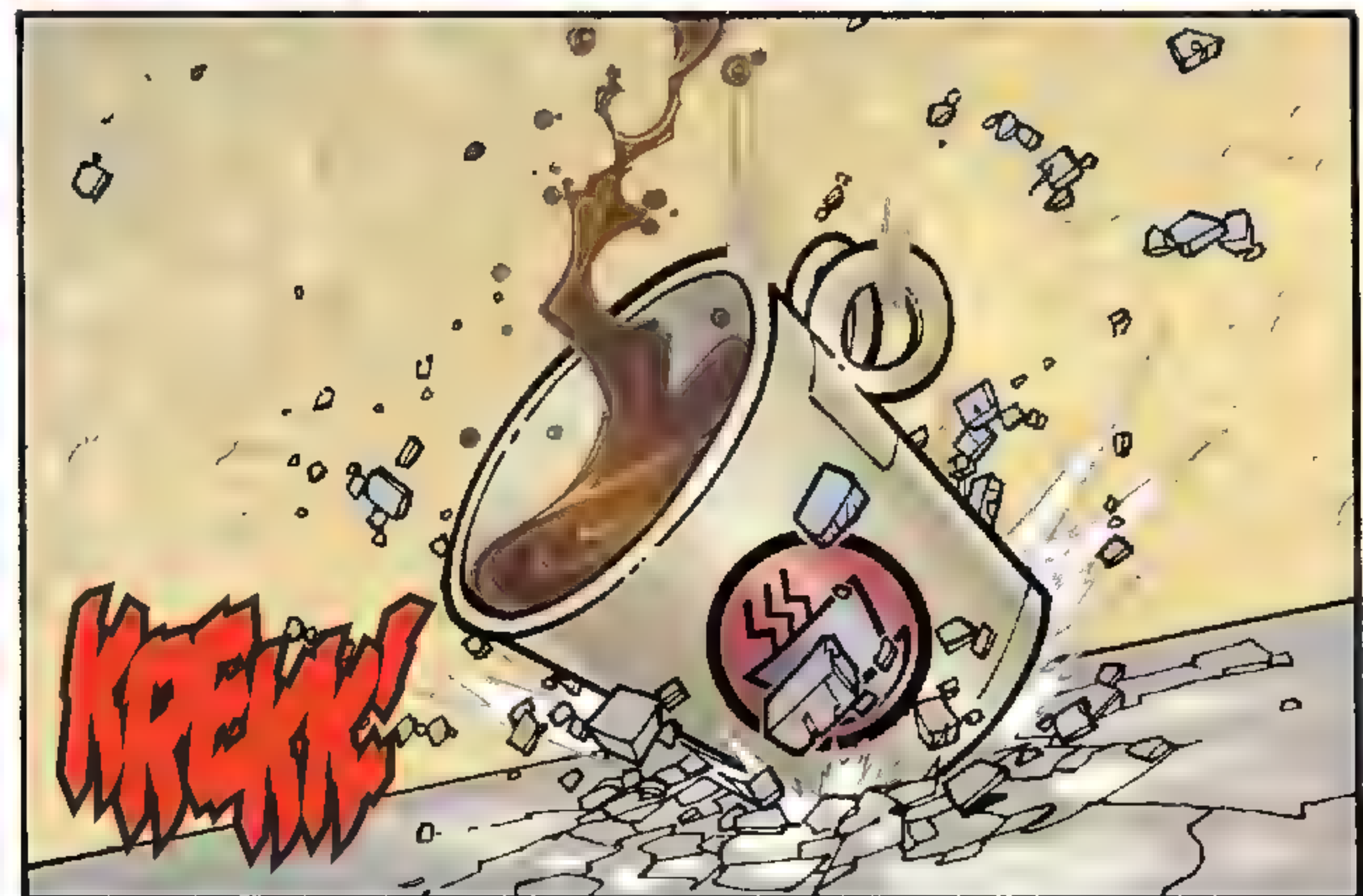
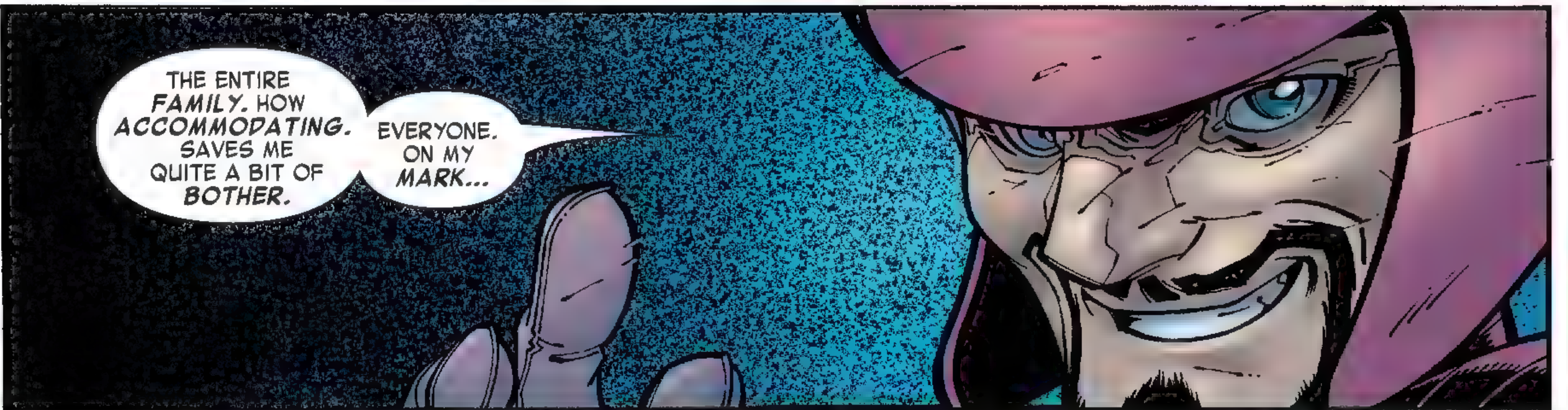
...WELL...  
YOU'LL SEE.  
YOU'LL ALL  
SEE.

BESIDES, THE GIRL  
HAS ABSOLUTELY NO  
POWERS. I TESTED HER  
THOROUGHLY.

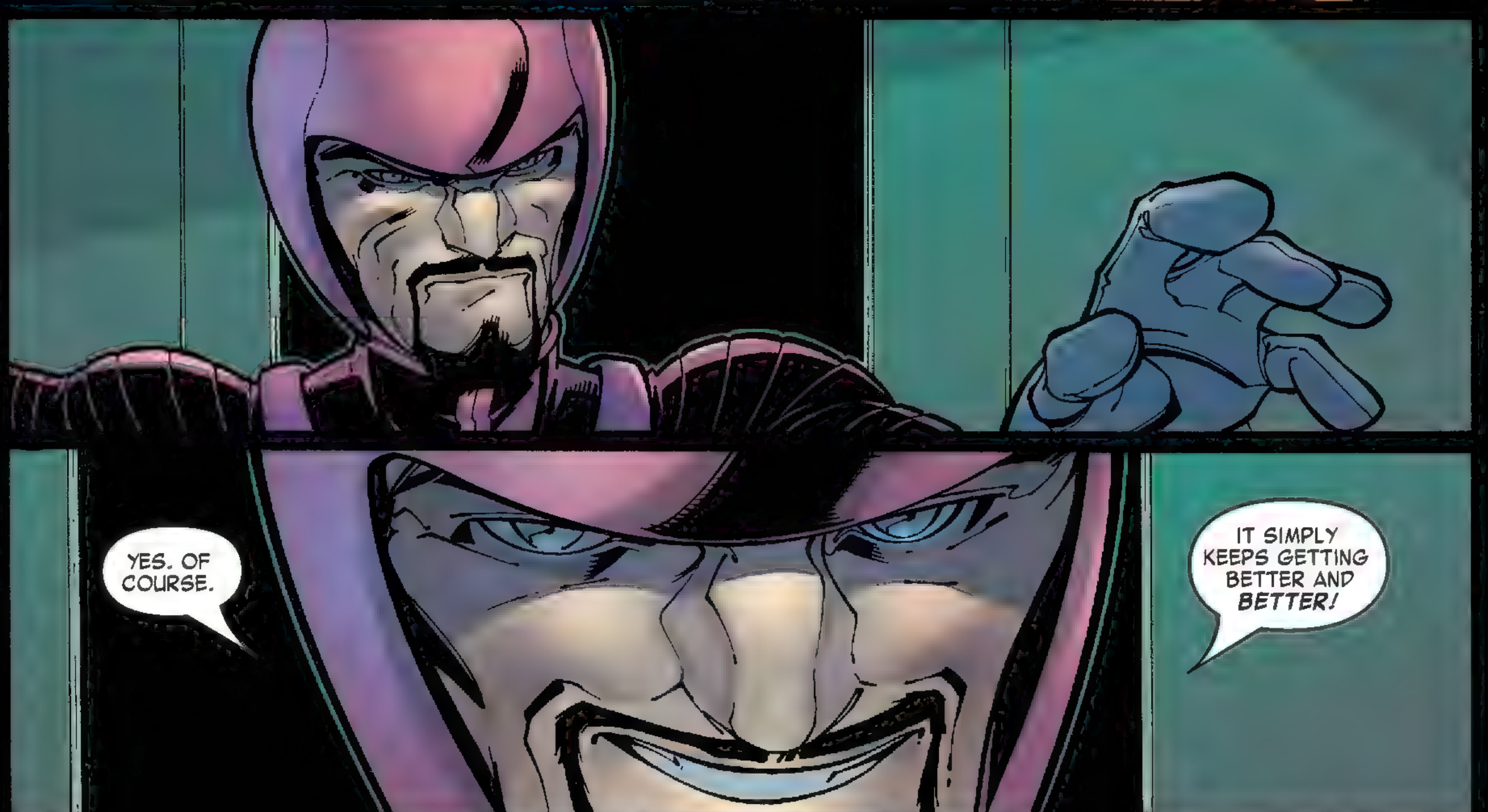
YOU?!  
WHEN--?

LOOK!

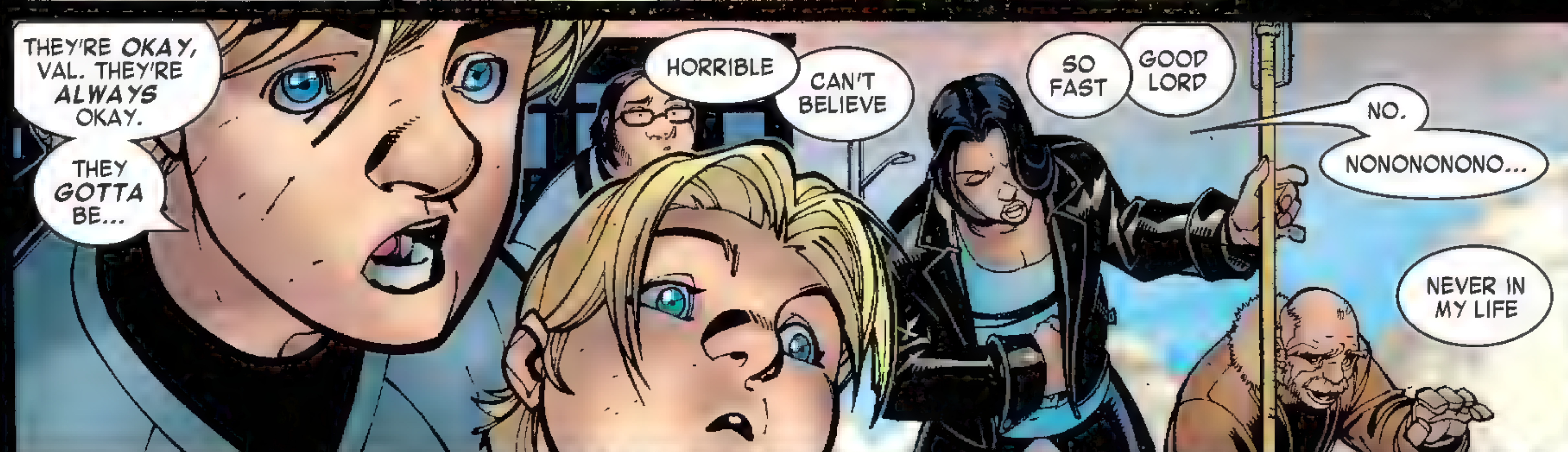
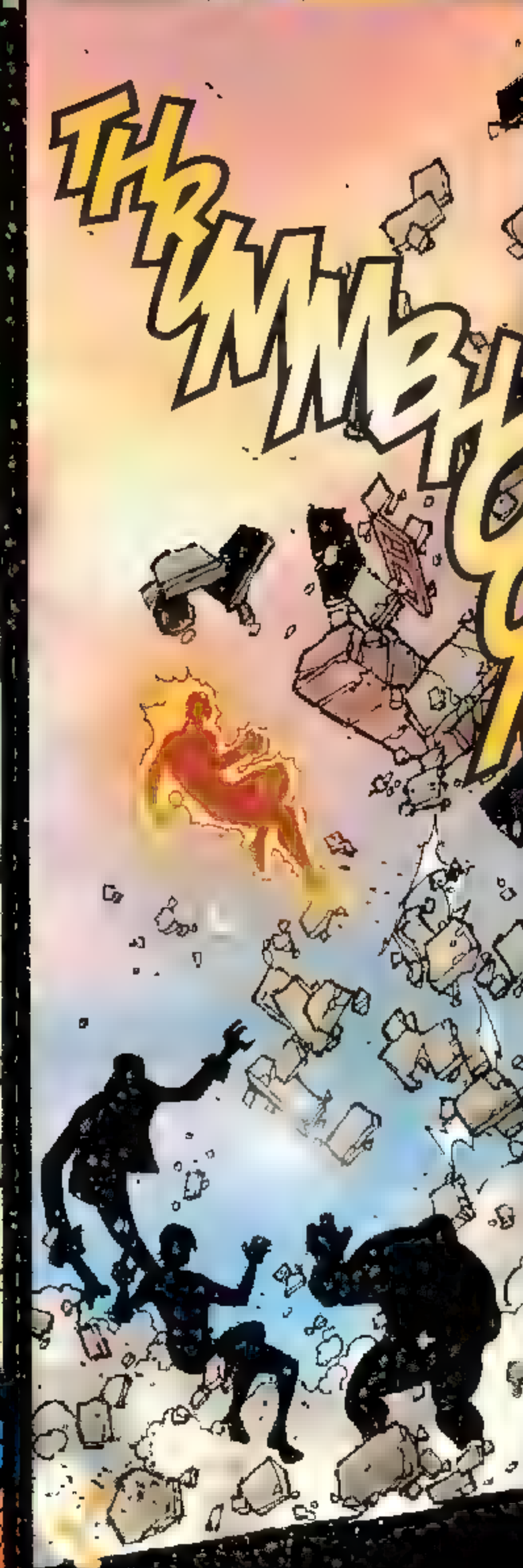
















--OBBERIN' TIME!



SUE--?

NOTHING ADVIL CAN'T CURE. WHAT'S HAPPENING? ARE WE UNDER ASSAULT? IS IT TERRAX OR DIABLO OR--?

NO SIGN OF AN ENEMY-- BUT THAT WAS NOT COINCIDENCE.

WHERE'S COLE? IS SHE--?

MOM! DAD!



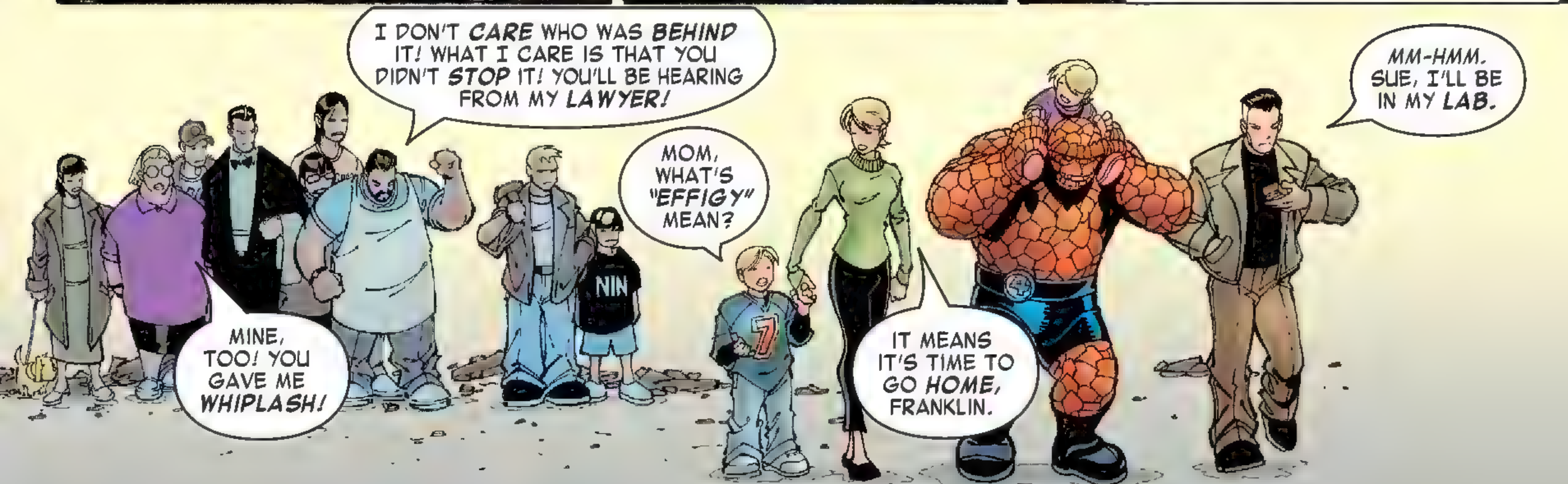
LEAVE ME ALONE!

COLE--!



YOU FREAKS! THAT WAS MY STORE! YOU JUST PANCACED IT!

NO, WE JUST SAVED NUMEROUS LIVES. STILL, IN A MASS/VOLUME ANALYSIS, THE PATTERN OF THE BUILDING'S COLLAPSE WAS VERY UNUSUAL. STUDYING THE DEBRIS MIGHT REVEAL WHO WAS BEHIND IT...



I DON'T CARE WHO WAS BEHIND IT! WHAT I CARE IS THAT YOU DIDN'T STOP IT! YOU'LL BE HEARING FROM MY LAWYER!

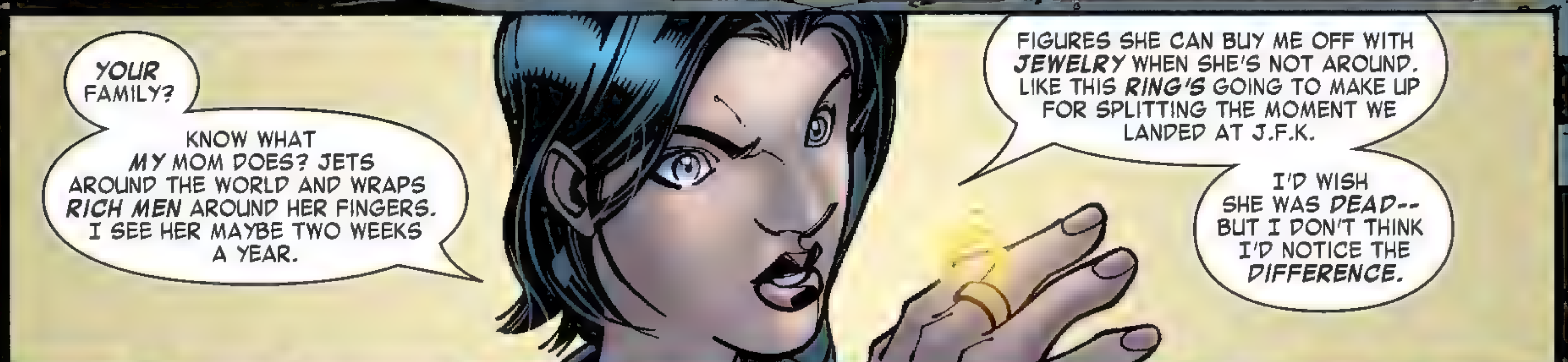
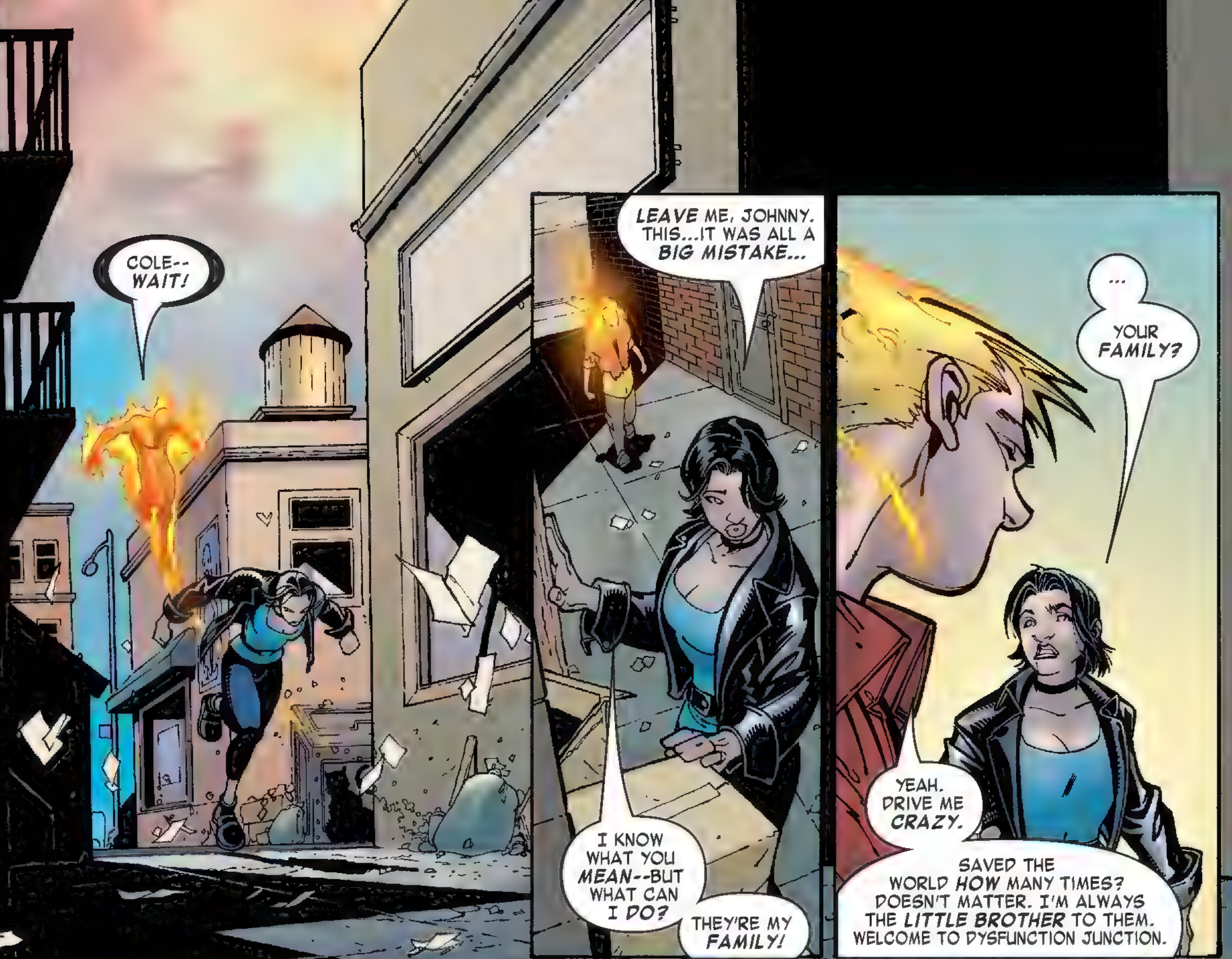
MOM, WHAT'S "EFFIGY" MEAN?

MINE, TOO! YOU GAVE ME WHIPLASH!

IT MEANS IT'S TIME TO GO HOME, FRANKLIN.

MM-HMM. SUE, I'LL BE IN MY LAB.









YEAH.

SO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE, BEING LEFT ON YOUR OWN.

YEAH? ME, I KINDA STOOD MY *GROUND*. CAN'T LET YOURSELF GET ALL BENT ABOUT THE BAD BREAKS WHEN THEY JUST KEEP *COMING*. YOU WANT *SUCKAGE*, TRY GOING TO FIFTEEN *SCHOOLS* IN TWELVE YEARS.

YOU REACHED OUT TO ME.

YEAH--I GUESS SO. MAYBE 'CAUSE... WELL...

I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T KNOW *WHY* I DID IT.

BUT Y'KNOW WHAT? I *NEVER* GO WITH MY MOM ON HER TRIPS. *NEVER*. BUT I CAME THIS TIME. I *WANTED* TO COME THIS TIME...

WELL, MY *SISTER* RAISED ME AS BEST SHE COULD, BUT... THAT WAS A LOT TO ASK OF HER. OF ANYONE. WE HAD TO BE PRETTY *FLEXIBLE*...ROLL WITH THE *PUNCHES*.

COUNSELORS KEPT TELLING ME TO MAKE *FRIENDS* 'CAUSE "NO ONE'S AN *ISLAND*"...BUT AN *ISLAND*-- THAT SOUNDS PRETTY GOOD TO ME SOMETIMES.

...TO MEET YOU.

WELL, THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE. I CAN GET YOU A *FAN CLUB* APPLICATION IF YOU WANT.

I HEARD THAT CLUB WENT *BANKRUPT*.

OUCH. OKAY, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME PROBLEMS LATELY COLLECTING *DUES*, BUT--

I WAS KIDDING, YOU DORK.

I...KNEW THAT.

YUH-HUH. SO...WHERE DO I GO TO PICK UP THIS APPLICATION...?





--AND THIS IS REED'S  
NANOMEGAWHATZIS.  
WARNING: NOT A  
FLYING TOY. NOW,  
OVER HERE...

COLE,  
YOU STILL  
WITH ME?



YEAH. YEAH. JUST THINKING...  
KINDA GOT OFF TO A ROCKY  
START WITH YOUR FAMILY.  
THINK THEY'RE **BACK**  
YET?

PROBABLY. GIVEN OUR  
CURRENT **POPULARITY**,  
I DON'T THINK EVEN  
**THEY'RE** BRAVE ENOUGH  
TO STAY OUT AFTER  
**DARK**.

I'M SURE  
THEY'LL SHOW UP  
AT AN INSANELY  
INAPPROPRIATE  
**MOMENT**.



IN THAT CASE, YOU GOT A PLACE I  
COULD, Y'KNOW, FRESHEN UP? LIKE  
THE **BATHROOM ZONE**, MAYBE? OR  
DO YOU GUYS JUST TAKE A **PILL**  
OR SOMETHING?

DON'T  
GIVE REED  
**IDEAS**.

DOWN  
THE HALL,  
LEFT, SECOND  
DOOR ON THE  
LEFT.



JOHNNY! THANK  
HEAVEN YOU'RE  
ALL RIGHT!

TOLDJA  
HE'D BE OKAY!  
BUT WHERE'S  
TH'--

JOHNNY,  
WHERE'S THE **GIRL**?  
MONITORS SHOWED  
**BOTH** OF YOU  
COMING IN!





SHE'S IN THE BATHROOM.

WHY?



OKAY. BREATHE DEEP.

YOU CAN DO THIS, GIRL!

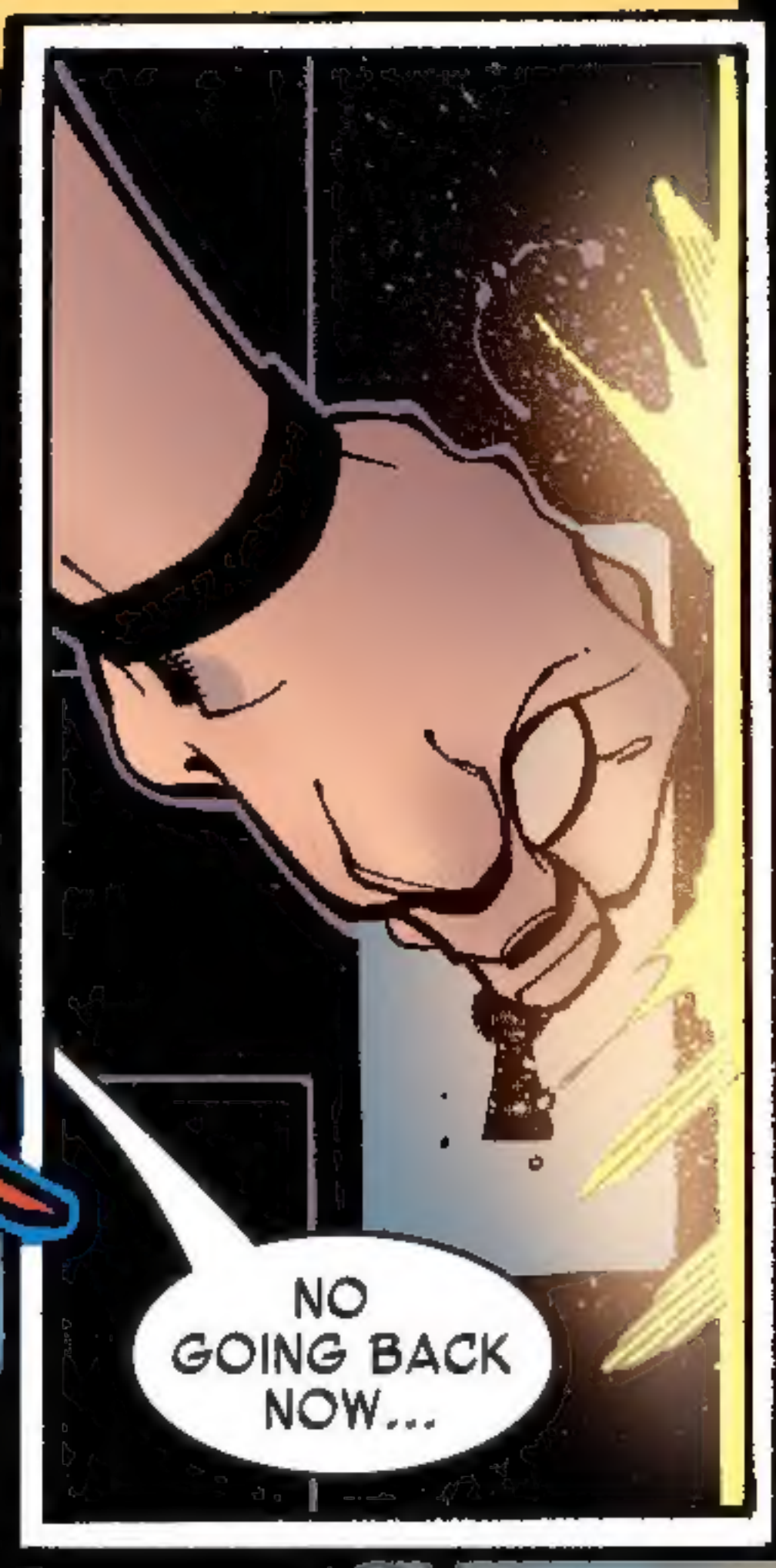


SHE'S BAIT, JOHNNY! THAT BUILDING COLLAPSE WAS NO ACCIDENT. THE DEBRIS WAS SATURATED WITH **IRRADIATED GRAVITRONS**, WHICH INCREASED THE STRUCTURE'S WEIGHT **EXPONENTIALLY** BEYOND ITS LOAD-BEARING CAPABILITY.

GRAVITRONS ARE NOT NATURALLY-OCCURRING PARTICLES. THEY WERE CREATED BY-- AND ARE USED BY-- ONLY ONE PERSON!



OH, NO.



NO GOING BACK NOW...







THANK YOU,  
COLE--WE COULD  
NEVER HAVE BYPASSED  
THE FANTASTIC FOUR'S  
SECURITY *WITHOUT*  
YOU.

WHAT--  
NO *HUG*? I DON'T  
THINK THAT'S ANY WAY  
TO GREET...

...YOUR  
*FATHER*...!